

# DELIGHTS

FROM THE

# GARDEN OF EDEN

NAWAL NASRALLAH



A COOKBOOK AND  
HISTORY OF THE  
IRAQI CUISINE

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A COOKBOOK AND HISTORY  
OF THE IRAQI CUISINE

Second Edition

NAWAL NASRALLAH



المطبخ العراقي

الأطباق وحضارة وقاريخ

نوال نصرالله

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*In loving memory of my son Bilal,  
who has been my inspiration.  
Despite his young years, he knew the meaning of food.  
In his school journal, he once wrote,  
'Love is when Mom makes brownies for me.'  
I regret, every second of my life,  
having missed the chance of seeing these words  
when he was still with us.*



*I am grateful to this book.  
It has been to me like the stories were to Sheherazad.*



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## PREFACE

*The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity than the discovery of a new star.* (French gastronome Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 1755–1826)

When reading this book, anticipate more than a taste of Iraqi food, expect a cultural immersion experience, which will cater to your culinary senses and intellect alike, an experience that I hope will stay with you long after the book is finished and food cooked from it has been enjoyed. As a cooking guide, the backbone of the book is certainly the recipes themselves, lots of them, given in a clear and detailed way so that they may be easily prepared with rewarding results. And if the directions in some of the recipes happen to be somewhat lengthy, such as that for making authentic traditional *tannour* bread in the convenience of our modern kitchens, I earnestly hope you will bear with me, for good food, like anything else worthwhile having in our lives, cannot be rushed.

The gastronomic history and culture of Iraq are interwoven with the recipes, so that the region and its cuisine may be better understood, and their role in the building of human civilization acknowledged. The book is supplemented with detailed menus and an extended Glossary to familiarize the user with the indigenous ingredients needed to create authentic Iraqi meals. In this second edition, metric equivalents to the American customary weights and cup measurements are provided, so that the recipes may be conveniently used everywhere.

A reviewer of the first edition of this book described it as being

*visibly reminiscent of medieval Arabic prose writings on biography or history: shifting between poetry and prose, offering independent tidbits inside the main narrative, and presenting a wide array of names, places, anecdotes, and examples halfway between digression and main narrative.* (Leyla Rouhi, 'Dialogue of Cuisines,' *Gastronomica*, Summer 2004, p.109)

This I choose to take as a compliment, for there is indeed something for everyone in the book, just like life itself, which is 'like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get,' as Forrest Gump's Momma said.

Nawal Nasrallah, New Hampshire, 2013

*Um Ali by Maysaloon Faraj,  
from exhibition  
'Boats and Burdens: Kites and  
Shattered Dreams,' 2004*

## BY-WAYS AND ASIDES

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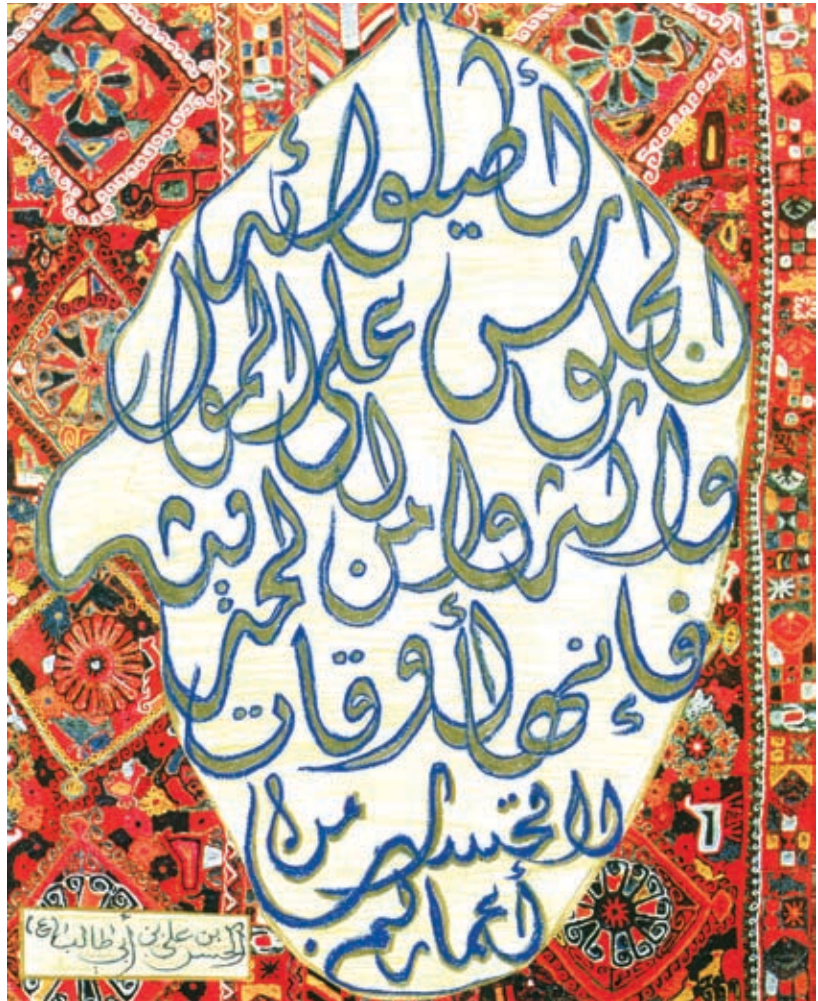


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'Sit at dinner tables as long as you can, and converse to your hearts' desire, for these are the bonus times of your lives.' A saying by al-Hasan bin 'Ali bin Abi Talib, grandson of Prophet Muhammad. Calligraphy by Shakir Mustafa

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